



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SUGGESTION IN DRAWING

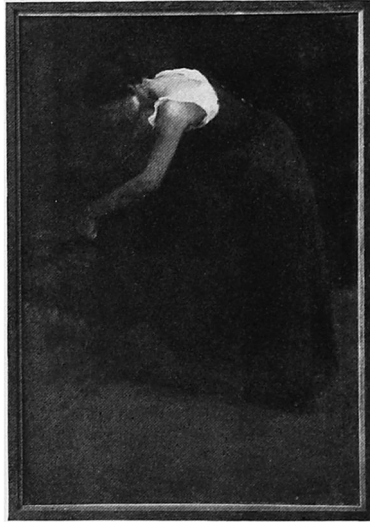
"It is far more difficult to be simple than to be complicated, far more difficult to sacrifice skill and cease exertion in the proper place than to expend both indiscriminately," said John Ruskin; and his words voice a principle against which even many experienced artists are prone to sin. At what point in the elaboration of a drawing shall one forswear detail and leave a dot, the hint of a line, or even white paper, to tell forcefully a simple pictorial story which over-elaboration might confuse or ruin?

This is a mooted question, which perhaps few professional artists would undertake to answer, but it is one of importance, since on its determination depends much of the effectiveness of a finished work. Shall one with the old Dutch painters count hairs, plait wrinkles, and enumerate leaves and grass-blades; or shall one respect the intelligence and cleverness of the spectator and leave imagination to fill in the minutiae that are only suggested?

In literature it is deemed an affront to the reader to take a page to narrate what could be hit off in a word. Is it not an affront to the picture-lover to work out laboriously with a network of lines what could be suggested to the mind by a single line?

A line-drawing, strictly speaking, cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered as an absolute reproduction of nature. Only distance and direction can be accurately represented through the medium of line. In a word, whatever other power of expression is possible in line must be through suggestion and not representation.

The Japanese have realized this fact, and have solved to their satisfaction some questions in art that are still puzzling the brains of many artists in other countries. By carefully avoiding in their



THE SHOE
By F. Holme

line-drawings any attempt to render light and shade, they have reduced line-drawing to what might be called a working basis, and the cleverness, the delicacy, the power of the better class of Japanese work have made it a study in principles for occidental nations.



MISTRESS K., ETCHING

By F. Holme

In nature, form is made manifest through the medium of light and shade, and in drawing it can be clearly expressed by means of simple outline. Starting, therefore, with outline as a basis, and considering a line as merely a conventional way of suggesting a boundary of a mass of tone or the outer edge of a form, it is pos-

sible with lines alone to suggest what in nature would be seen in masses of light and shade.

Differences in texture, the size of various objects in relation to one another, the complex expressions of a human face, the aspects of nature under different atmospheric conditions—in fact, an almost endless range of subjects—fall within the possibilities of line-drawing. To the student of line-work it is the manner in which each individual line is handled to make it tell its own part of the story that makes the chief charm of a finished drawing.

The fact that lines and words are both used as mediums of expression makes it easy to illustrate this point by referring to two well-known writers whose literary style is so marked and individual that the difference in their handling of their special medium of expression can readily be seen. In their manner of telling a story, no two authors could differ more widely than Zola and De Maupassant, although the result aimed at by each is essentially the same—the illustration of the effect of some deep human passion.

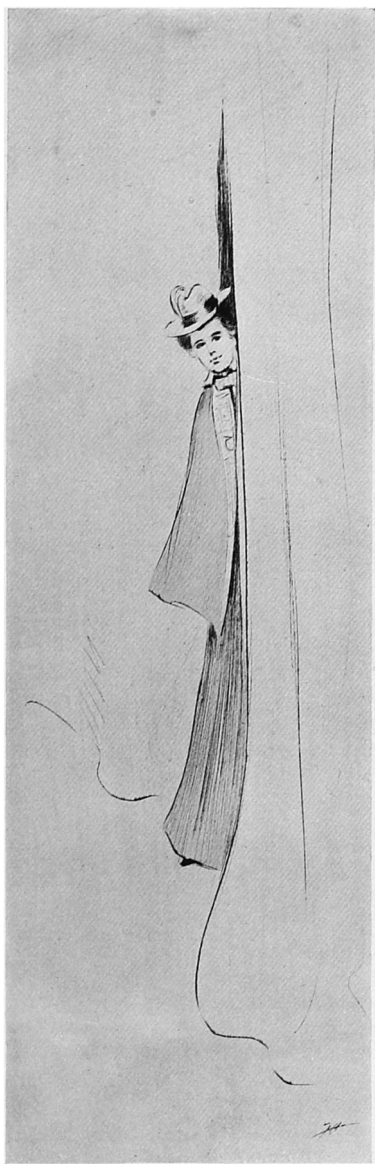
Zola leads the reader to an intimate knowledge of the inner life of the characters he describes by a cumulative description of the multitudinous details of their daily lives in such a way that under this mass of detail the imagination is overpowered with a sense of the reality of the characters and incidents. When the book is finished, the reader carries in his recollection the feeling of having viewed these incidents with his own eyes and of having lived among the scenes described.

De Maupassant's method is almost entirely the reverse of this. Instead of an overwhelming mass of detail, he paints with a few well-chosen words a picture just as real, just as intense in feeling, and one might say, just as full of detail, from the fact that so much is merely suggested.

As individual illustrations of the power of suggestion in literature, one may further cite two notable novels that a few years ago had a wide vogue in English-speaking communities, "Robert Elsmere," by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and "The Story of an African Farm,"



PENCIL SKETCH
By F. Holme



THE CURTAIN, ETCHING
By F. Holme

by Olive Schreiner. The former is a long-drawn-out, labored presentation of a religious problem, in which the author jealously reserves the right to describe every emotion, record every thought, analyze every feeling, argue to the finish every pro and con, and reason from premise to conclusion everything about which a question could be raised. Despite the power of the book, one feels on laying it down that he has struggled through a painstaking, logical Unitarian tract.

Olive Schreiner's book, on the other hand, is cast on the line of suggestion. She hints at more than she tells in detail. Her pictures are clear-cut, her descriptions are terse and forceful, her situations are dramatic and telling. In reading the book, one feels inclined every now and then to lay it aside and let thought or imagination take up the thread where the author wisely drops it, and round an epigram into a sermon, or elaborate an outline into a finished picture. Literature has few more remarkable chapters than that in which the little boy builds him an altar of cobble-stones, puts on it his mutton-chops as a meat-offering to God, reverentially bows his face in the sand, and waits for the Deity to come and take his offering, only to find on raising his head that the Lord has not come, but that the sun has tried the fat out of his mutton-chops. This incident, briefly and picturesquely told,

has more point and conviction than a volume of German theological argument.

These examples represent the methods of literary artists of the highest rank. Every student of literature—and every student of art—who is interested in style and the use of mediums of expression will find profit in a careful study of the instances given.



STUDY

By F. Holme

The artist who works in line can find among the world's masters line-draughtsmen equally great and equally diverse in their methods. Menzel, a German, and Hokusai, a Japanese, might almost be said to parallel Zola and De Maupassant, just referred to. Each of these masters knows not only the power that lies in repetition, but the power that lies in selection and omission. Each knows how to subordinate the details to the mass, to reduce a mass of tone to its essential accents, to "boil it down," if one may use the phrase, to a few lines

and accents here and there, and to indicate a movement of a figure with a single sweeping stroke.

One may be pardoned for again reverting to John Ruskin, than whom art has never had a more acute critic. Says he: "We shall consider those pictures as conveying the highest ideas of power which attain the most *perfect* end with the slightest possible means;



DREAMS, PENCIL DRAWING

By F. Holme

not, observe, those in which, though much has been done with little, all has not been done, but from the picture in which *all* has been done and yet not a touch thrown away. The quantity of work in the sketch is necessarily less in proportion to the effect obtained than in the picture; but yet the picture involves the greater power if out of all the additional labor bestowed upon it not a touch has been lost."

It was pointed out in a recent issue of BRUSH AND PENCIL that an etcher who speaks strongly must speak concisely, significantly, rapidly; that half the beauty of an etching is in its suggestion; that no highly worked-up plate has the charm of one which leaves full



THE CRITIC
By F. Holme



play to the imagination. The same is true of every class of line-drawings.

The artist who tells little and suggests much virtually challenges the intelligence of those who view his productions, and the challenge is relished. There is a sense of power in the ability to express an idea by a few strokes of the pen or pencil, and the person who studies a picture thus produced feels a pleasure akin to that experienced by the artist who made it. We enjoy an epigram from its conciseness of expression and aptitude of phrase. A drawing executed with due regard to suggestion is virtually little more than a pictorial epigram, and we enjoy it for the same reason that we enjoy a verbal epigram.

The legitimate use of line in drawing is governed by a few simple principles. As the first appeal a picture makes is to the sense of sight, the effect of lines upon the eye is the first point that must be considered in order to properly appreciate or understand the purpose of lines when used as a means of pictorial expression. The natural tendency of the eye is to follow the direction of a line, while a mass of tone will attract and hold the attention.

A drawing made in pure outline is always more or less monotonous and empty. The eye, like Noah's dove, which returned because it found no place to rest, finds no point to hold it in an outline drawing. A mass of black or gray would supply the missing element and serve to complete the composition.

As a result of this, the decorative possibilities of line and mass should be considered first of all in every linear composition. Simple arrangements are more pleasing to the sense of sight, because when a composition is confused or complicated the eye is disquieted and repelled rather than attracted. Harmonious composition is just as necessary in a picture intended to be printed on a page as in a mural decoration.

In pictures intended to be used in connection with type-matter, the



MISS P., ETCHING
By F. Holme



MISS L., LITHOGRAPH
By F. Holme

size and shape of the page and the style and arrangement of the type must be considered by the artist from the very first sketch. The illustrator should familiarize himself with the make-up of a printed page, just as the artist who designs a mural decoration should be familiar with the architectural characteristics of the building it is to adorn.

Any picture intended to be viewed at less than arm's-length should be small enough and simple enough in arrangement to allow the eye to take it in at a glance. In pictures of this kind—and all illustrations and nearly all engravings, prints, etc., would come under this class—directness of execution is usually a pleasing quality. A simple arrangement of masses and the elimination of all unnecessary and confusing details are two points

that are of the highest importance in all black-and-white drawings, and where the drawings are to be made in line instead of tones, "the fewer lines the better" is a safe rule to observe.

The strongest reason for this is that the point is not as suitable a medium for tone-drawing as the brush. Pen and ink and the etching-needle are primarily implements for drawing lines, and they should not be forced to do work for which they are unsuited, and more especially in these days of process reproduction, when it is possible to reproduce anything by half-tone without the intervention of the wood or steel engraver to break the picture up into lines in order to form a "printing surface."

But these are technical considerations, and as such, no matter how important, they may seem uninteresting. They nevertheless emphasize the fact that the implement used by the artist, whether the etcher's needle, the painter's brush, or the sculptor's chisel, is the medium he uses to put his impression into tangible form, and that the possibilities of expression with this medium should be governed, in a certain way, by the rules of any other language.

The verbose story-teller who delights to embroider his narrative with gaudy details which have nothing to do with the point he wishes to illustrate, is familiar to everybody. Any one can easily find by running through his list of acquaintances some one person who

will serve to call to mind the disadvantage arising from a too liberal use of words. To say a thing and let it go at that is not easy. It requires a certain amount of courage, as well as self-restraint, to resist the temptation toward elaboration after the work has been



MISTRESS B., ETCHING
By F. Holme

completed, and too many people, both in art and in literature, have yielded to this temptation, and as Bill Nye has expressed it, have "sandpapered the soul out of their productions."

The country editor who told the foreman when he came to ask for a short editorial to fill a space on a page, that he didn't have time to write a short one, knew what he was saying. He knew that the



PENCIL SKETCH
By F. Holme

art of condensation, being a matter of selection, requires not only time, but thought as well.

Carlyle, in one of his caustic criticisms on another writer's work, puts into words an idea that has doubtless occurred to many readers. He says: "There is a great discovery still to be made in literature, that of paying literary men by the quantity they do not write. Nay, in sober truth, is not this actually the rule in all writing; and, moreover, in all conduct and acting? Not what stands above ground, but what lies unseen under it, as the root and subterrene element it sprang from and emblemed forth, determines the value. Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better."

To transfer the same thought to the realm of pictorial art, who shall say that in the etching or the pen or pencil drawing that is good for anything there are not blank spaces suggestive of lines that are better than the lines drawn, blank spaces more eloquent of power, mystery, beauty, than the details supplied?

FRANK HOLME.

